

### **REMARKS**

The Office Action dated April 22, 2003, has been received and carefully noted. The following remarks are submitted as a full and complete response thereto. Claims 1-7 are pending.

The specification has been amended to correct a typographical error.

Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Higgins, Jr. (U.S. Patent No. 6,092,903, "Higgins"). The Applicants traverse the rejection and respectfully submit that claims 1-3 recite subject matter that is neither disclosed nor suggested by Higgins.

Claim 1 recites a plated synthetic resin member for a vehicle comprising a main body made of a synthetic resin and a plating coat formed on the surface of the main body and having a metallic gloss. The main body is molded from a translucent synthetic resin and the plating coat formed on the surface of the main body is translucent. The main body has a built-in lamp that can light up.

As a result of the claimed configuration of elements, the plating coat formed on the surface of the translucent main body can give off a metallic gloss during the day, thereby providing a high-class image for the member. This high-class image can also be maintained at night when the lighted lamp within the member keeps the plating coat in a light-emitting state. As the lighted lamp within the operating main body puts the plating coating in a light emitting state, it informs an occupant of the presence of the operating main body, thereby enhancing its manual operability. The Applicants respectfully submit that the prior art fails to disclose or suggest the claimed features of

the invention and, therefore, fails to provide the critical non-obvious advantages that are provided by the invention.

Higgins discloses a lighted keyboard having keypads 30 which are movable in a downward direction. The keypads 30 are constructed of a translucent polymeric material such as polycarbonate which will transmit light readily through the entire keypad material. A reflective coating 35 is disposed on a back surface 36 of the keypads 30 to reflect light 37 from the translucent keypad material. There is a dual-side illumination system including a lamp 20 disposed in translucent plastic mounting blocks positioned adjacent to keypads 30.

With respect to claims 1-3, the Applicants respectfully submit that Higgins fails to disclose or suggest the claimed features of the invention. Claims 2 and 3 depend from claim 1. Claim 1 recites that the main body has a built-in lamp that can light up. In contrast, the keypad 30 in Higgins does not have a built-in lamp. The lamp 20 in the lighted keyboard is outside of the main body 30. In particular, the lamp 20 is disclosed in Higgins as being fixedly mounted in translucent plastic mounting blocks positioned adjacent to keypad.

In addition, claim 1 recites a plating coat formed on the surface of the main body and having a metallic gloss. In contrast, the reflective coating 35 on the back surface 36 of the keypad 30 does not have a metallic gloss. Thus, there is no teaching or suggestion in Higgins that the reflective coating 35 has a metallic gloss.

Furthermore, claim 1 recites that the plating coat formed on the surface of the main body is translucent. Although the Office Action refers to element 35 in Higgins as

a "translucent plating coat", the Applicants respectfully submit that Higgins refers to element 35 as a reflective coating. See, column 3, line 41 of Higgins. As such, Higgins does not disclose a translucent plating coat and, further, teaches away from the claimed invention as the reflective coating in Higgins cannot function in the same manner as the translucent plating coat recited in claim 1. Accordingly, Higgins fails to disclose or suggest each and every feature of the invention as cited in claim 1 and, therefore, dependent claims 2 and 3.

Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Porsche (U.S. Patent No. 2,760,050). The Applicants traverse the rejection and respectfully submit that claim 4 recite subject matter that is neither disclosed nor suggested by Porsche.

Claim 4 recites a plated synthetic resin member for a vehicle. A lock release lever provided on a door of an automobile comprises a lever main body molded from a translucent synthetic resin. A translucent plating coat is formed on the surface of the lever main body that faces a vehicle compartment. The lever main body comprises a built-in lamp that can light up.

Porsche discloses a door handle lighting fixture for automotive vehicles. There is a metal door handle 12 provided with openings 17 and 18 disposed respectively at the front and rear sides in such a way that light from a bulb 13 may shine both forwardly and rearwardly. The front opening 17 and rear opening 18 are closed off with pieces of transparent material 19 and 20, respectively. Transparent material 23 is also inserted in the bottom 22 of the door handle 12, while transparent or translucent insert 24 is

disposed on the front face of the door handle and can be used as a blinker or directional light.

With respect to claim 4, the Applicants respectfully submit that Porsche fails to disclose or suggest the claimed features of the invention. Claim 4 recites a lever main body molded from a translucent synthetic resin. In contrast, Porsche discloses that the door handle 12 is metal. Although the Office Action took the position that element 20, the translucent material, was comparable to the lever main body of the present invention, there is no teaching or suggestion that the translucent material 20 is molded from a translucent synthetic resin. Furthermore, element 20 is merely a piece or section of translucent material that is part of the door handle 12 which acts as a lever for opening the car door in Porsche.

Claim 4 also recites a translucent plating coat formed on the surface of the lever main body that faces a vehicle compartment. All of the components of the door handle in Porsche are on the outside of the door and do not face the vehicle compartment. As noted in Porsche, a portion of the door handle can include a blinker or directional light, indicating that the handle is on the outside portion of the door. Further, none of the light transmitting material 19, 20, 23, and 24 face the vehicle. Materials 19 and 20 are disposed over openings 17 and 18 which face a front and rear side of the vehicle so that the bulb 13 may shine forwardly and rearwardly. In addition, material 23 faces the ground and material 24 faces outwardly from the vehicle. Accordingly, Porsche fails to disclose or suggest each and every feature of the invention as recited in claim 4.

Claims 6 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kumagai (U.S. Patent No. 4,222,435). The Applicants traverse the rejection and respectfully submit that claims 6 and 7 recite subject matter that is neither disclosed nor suggested by Kumagai.

Claim 6 recites a plated synthetic resin member for a vehicle. An operating knob of an air-conditioner outlet vent device provided in an instrument panel of an automobile comprises a knob main body molded from a translucent synthetic resin and a translucent plating coat formed on the surface of the knob main body that faces a vehicle compartment. The knob main body has a built-in lamp that can light up.

Kumagai discloses an air conditioning display system for vehicles including a knob 50. See, Fig. 7 of Kumagai. The knob 50 is provided on the end of a function level 51 and has an opening. A white-colored diffusion plate 501 and a smoked panel 502 adhered thereto are disposed in this opening. The diffusion plate 501 is formed by a glass or a colored plate, and the smoked panel 502 is formed by an almost black-colored half-transparent glass or acrylic plate. There are first and second lamps 64 and 65 disposed in the knob 50 the function lever 51.

With respect to claims 6 and 7, the Applicants respectfully submit that Kumagai fails to disclose or suggest the claimed features of the invention. Claim 7 depends from claim 6. Claim 6 recites a knob main body molded from a translucent synthetic resin. In contrast, there is no disclosure or suggestion in Kumagai that the knob is molded from a translucent synthetic resin. Although the Office Action took the position that element 501, the diffusion plate, is comparable to the knob main body, the Applicants submit that

element 50 is disclosed in Kumagai as the knob. The diffusion plate is merely fitted in an opening in the knob 50. Accordingly, the diffusion plate 501 is not comparable to the knob of the present invention. As such, Kumagai would fail to disclose or suggest a knob main body molded from a translucent synthetic resin.

Even assuming that the diffusion plate 501 is comparable to the knob main body, as stated in the Office Action, the Applicants respectfully submit that Kumagai fails to disclose a translucent plating coat formed on the surface of the knob main body as recited in claim 6. The Office Action took the position that the smoked panel 502 is comparable to the translucent plating coat of the present invention. However, the Applicants submit that the smoked panel 502 is disclosed as a transparent glass or a colored plate. Transparent glass or acrylic plate is not comparable to a translucent plating coat as recited in claim 6. As such, the Applicants respectfully submit that Kumagai fails to disclose or suggest at least a translucent plating coat formed on the surface of the knob main body, as recited in claim 6.

Furthermore, with respect to claims 6 and 7, the Applicants respectfully submit that Kumagai further does not to disclose an operating knob of an air-conditioner outlet vent device as recited in claim 6. The knob 50 in Kumagai is not disclosed as being of an air conditioning display system outlet vent device, as recited in claim 6. The outlets 23', 24', and 25' of Kumagai do not have an operating knob as recited in claim 6. As such, Kumagai does not disclose at least an operating knob of an air-conditioner outlet vent device. Therefore, Kumagai fails to disclose or suggest each and every feature of the invention as recited in claims 6 and 7.

Under U.S. Patent practice, "[a] claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference." Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987). "The identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the ... claim." Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co., 868 F.2d 1226, 1236, 9 USPQ2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989). As Higgins, Porsche and Kumagai fail to disclose the features of the invention as recited in claims 1-4, 6 and 7, the Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-4, 6 and 7 are not anticipated by Higgins, Porsche or Kumagai, nor are claims 1-4, 6 and 7 obvious in view of Higgins, Porsche or Kumagai.

Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Porsche in view of Higgins. Porsche was cited for disclosing many of the claimed elements of the invention with the exception of the lever main body being molded from polycarbonate, acrylic or ABS. Higgins was cited for curing this deficiency. The Applicants traverse the rejection and respectfully submit that claim 5 recites subject matter that is neither disclosed nor suggested by the combination of Higgins and Porsche.

Claim 5 depends from claim 4. As discussed above, Porsche fails to disclose each and every feature of the invention as recited in claim 4 as the reference fails to disclose a lever main body molded from a translucent synthetic resin, and a translucent plating coat that faces a vehicle compartment. Higgins fails to cure these deficiencies in Porsche in that Higgins fails to disclose at least a translucent plating coat that faces a

vehicle compartment. Accordingly, the combination of Porsche and Higgins fails to disclose or suggest each and every feature of the invention as recited in claim 4 and, therefore, dependent claim 5.

Claims 1-7 are pending. Claims 2 and 3 depend from claim 1, claim 5 depends from claim 4, and claim 7 depends from claim 6. The Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2, 3, 5, and 7 are allowable for their dependency from allowable base claims 1, 4 and 6, as well as the additional subject matter recited therein. As discussed above, Higgins, Porsche, and Kumagai fail to disclose or suggest the claimed features of the invention. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request allowance of claims 1-7 and the prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowability.

Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.



In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension, together with any additional fees that may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to counsel's Deposit Account No. 01-2300, **referencing docket number 107348-00209.**

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rhonda L. Barton", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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